

Response to Office Action
Dated December 16, 2004

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Amendments to the Claims

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application.

Listing of Claims

Claims 1-25 (canceled).

26 (previously presented). A panel piece mountable on a structure and engageable with a similar panel piece to form a wall panel assembly, said panel piece comprising:

a front side;

a rear side;

a first edge having a tongue extending lengthwise therealong and projecting outwardly therefrom substantially co-planar with said panel piece, a first flange being positioned between said tongue and said rear side, a second flange being positioned between said tongue and said front side; and

a second edge positioned opposite to said first edge and having a groove extending lengthwise therealong, said groove being defined by a rear leg positioned adjacent to said rear side, a front leg positioned in spaced relation to said rear leg and adjacent to said front side, and a base extending between said legs, said rear leg extending further from said base than said front leg such that, upon engagement of said tongue of said panel piece within said groove of said similar panel piece, said first flange engages said rear leg, said tongue being sized so as to remain in spaced apart relation away from said base, and said second flange being sized so as to remain in spaced apart relation away from said front leg, said tongue of said panel piece being captured between said front and rear legs of said similar panel piece.

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27 (previously presented). A panel piece according to Claim 26, wherein said tongue extends substantially along the entire length of said first edge.

28 (previously presented). A panel piece according to Claim 26, wherein said groove extends substantially along the entire length of said second edge.

29 (previously presented). A panel piece according to Claim 26, further comprising a plurality of apertures extending through said rear leg, said apertures being positioned in spaced apart relation lengthwise along said rear leg for receiving fasteners therethrough for attachment of said panel piece to said structure.

30 (previously presented). A panel piece according to Claim 29, wherein said structure comprises an elevator.

31 (previously presented). A panel piece according to Claim 26, wherein said panel piece is formed from a laminate.

32 (previously presented). A panel piece according to Claim 31, wherein said laminate comprises wood and non-wood materials.

33 (previously presented). A wall panel assembly mountable on a structure and comprised of a plurality of interengageable panel pieces, each of said panel pieces comprising:

a front side;

a rear side;

a first edge having a tongue extending lengthwise therealong and projecting outwardly therefrom substantially co-planar with said panel piece, a first flange being positioned between said tongue and said rear side, a second

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flange being positioned between said tongue and said front side; and

a second edge positioned opposite to said first edge and having a groove extending lengthwise therealong, said groove being defined by a rear leg positioned adjacent to said rear side, a front leg positioned in spaced relation to said rear leg and adjacent to said front side, and a base extending between said legs, said rear leg extending further from said base than said front leg such that, upon engagement of said tongue of one of said panel pieces within said groove of another of said panel pieces, said first flange engages said rear leg, said tongue is sized so as to remain in spaced apart relation away from said base, said second flange is sized so as to remain in spaced apart relation away from said front leg, and said tongue of said one panel piece is captured between said front and rear legs of said other panel piece.

34 (previously presented). A wall panel assembly according to Claim 33, wherein said tongue on each said panel piece extends substantially along the entire length of said first edge.

35 (previously presented). A wall panel assembly according to Claim 33, wherein said groove on each said panel piece extends substantially along the entire length of said second edge.

36 (previously presented). A wall panel assembly according to Claim 23, further comprising a plurality of apertures extending through said rear leg on each said panel piece, said apertures being positioned in spaced apart relation lengthwise along said rear leg for receiving fasteners therethrough for attachment of said panel pieces to said structure.

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37 (previously presented). A wall panel assembly according to Claim 33, wherein said structure comprises an elevator.

38 (previously presented). A wall panel assembly according to Claim 33, wherein each of said panel pieces is formed from a laminate.

39 (previously presented). A wall panel assembly according to Claim 38, wherein said laminate comprises wood and non-wood materials.

Claims 40-59 (canceled).

60 (previously presented). A method of installing a wall panel assembly onto a support structure, said method comprising the steps of:

providing a plurality of panel pieces, each said panel piece comprising:

a front side;

a rear side;

a first edge having a tongue extending lengthwise therealong and projecting outwardly therefrom substantially co-planar with said panel piece, a first flange being positioned between said tongue and said rear side, a second flange being positioned between said tongue and said front side;

a second edge positioned opposite to said first edge and having a groove extending lengthwise therealong, said groove being defined by a rear leg positioned adjacent to said rear side, a front leg positioned in spaced relation to said rear leg and adjacent to said front side, and a base extending between said legs, said rear leg extending further from said base than said front leg;

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attaching at least one of said panel pieces to said support structure; and

engaging said tongue of another of said panel piece within said groove of said one panel piece, said first flange of said other panel piece thereby engaging said rear leg of said one panel piece, said tongue being sized so as to remain in spaced apart relation away from said base on said one panel piece, and said second flange of said other panel piece being sized so as to remain in spaced apart relation away from said front leg on said one panel piece, said tongue of said other panel piece being captured between said front and rear legs of said one panel piece.

Claim 61 (canceled).